District 7010 Policy and Procedure on Preventing and Addressing Harassment / Dealing with Club and District Conflict

Adopted April 12th, 2025

I. Statement of Policy

As per Section 26.120 of Rotary International Policies, Rotary District 7010 is committed to maintaining an environment that is free from any kind of harassment, which includes unwelcome verbal, visual, written or physical contact, advances, or comments that harass, disrupt, or interfere with another's participation in any Rotary activities by creating an intimidating or hostile environment.

II. DEI / Rotarian Code of Conduct

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy provides a supportive framework for how Rotary members can create and maintain an environment that is collaborative, positive, and healthy for everyone.

The Rotary Code of conduct (Section 26.140) asks Rotary members to:

- Use respectful language
- Be supportive
- Foster a welcoming and inclusive environment
- Celebrate diversity

Although free expression is important, what we say and how we behave matter. Rotary does not tolerate speech or behaviour that promotes bias, discrimination, prejudice, or hatred because of age, ethnicity, race, colour, disabilities, religion, socioeconomic status, culture, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

All Rotary leaders, from club presidents and district governors to directors and trustees, are expected to apply the code of conduct uniformly by taking responsibility for how their words and actions may affect others, while also holding others accountable for what they say and/or do.

As a Rotarian, we are expected to:

1. Act with integrity and high ethical standards in our personal and professional life
2. Deal fairly with others and treat them and their occupations with respect

3. Use our professional skills through Rotary to mentor young people, help those with special needs, and improve people's quality of life in your community and around the world
4. Avoid behaviour that reflects adversely on Rotary or other Rotarians
5. Help maintain a harassment-free environment at Rotary meetings, events, and activities, report any suspected harassment, and help ensure non-retaliation to those individuals who report harassment

III. Scope

Anyone, including members, volunteers, vendors, and guests who attend or participate in Rotary meetings, trips, activities, or social events is subject to this Policy and Procedure. **Everyone** must help maintain conditions that promote safety, courtesy, dignity, and respect for all.

Harassment is defined as any unwelcome verbal, visual, written or physical contact which creates an intimidating or hostile environment.

Any form of harassment, derogatory comments or jokes, or the distribution or display of written or graphic materials, whether based on one's race, colour, age, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, physical appearance or any other legally protected characteristic or activity is prohibited. Any allegations of criminal behaviour must be referred to local law enforcement.

Examples of sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual flirtations, touching, advances, jokes or propositions
- Demands for sexual favours
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body
- Sexually degrading words to describe an individual
- Sexually suggestive or insulting sounds or gestures, including whistling
- Sexual propositions or continual requests or invitations
- Unsolicited comments about a person's personal or sex life

Examples of non-sexual harassment include inappropriate and offensive:

- Comments
- Non verbal actions which are offensive
- Deliberately undermining a member or guest
- Jokes
- Written or graphic materials that belittle a person based on any of the protected categories listed in the paragraph above (race, colour, age, etc.).

Whether sexual or non-sexual, to meet the level of harassment, the offensive behaviour must be repeated, unless it is a physical sexual assault.

The District will work with clubs to communicate this policy and procedure for preventing and addressing harassment within clubs, among members, and with other participants. If sexual harassment is found, contact with the individual is prohibited. Criminal activity shall be reported to local law enforcement.

IV. Responsibilities

A member's responsibility*:* Creating a harassment-free environment is **everyone's r**esponsibility. If you see something that appears to be harassment, let the person know that those actions are not in line with Rotary's policies. Talk about your concerns with club or district leaders. Silently witnessing an incident without taking action suggests that the behaviour is condoned.

A Club's responsibility: An allegation of harassment at a Rotary meeting, event, or activity must be reviewed by the club board. The board must respond within a reasonable time, typically one month. In a small club or in a situation where the club president or another board member is the subject of the complaint, reach out to a past president or president-elect who should reach out to the District Governor, who will direct it to the District Harassment and Prevention committee for help with handling the complaint. If a member of the club board is the subject of the complaint, they should not participate in the discussion. If you have reported harassment to your club leaders and feel that the club board has not addressed it adequately, report the behaviour to your district governor or the district committee that handles harassment allegations.

District 7010's responsibility: An allegation of harassment at a Rotary district meeting, event, or activity or a complaint that involves members from multiple Rotary clubs will be reviewed by the District Governor or the District Harassment and Prevention committee. The governor or committee must respond within a reasonable time, but no longer than one month. If the district governor or the governor's spouse/partner is the subject of the complaint, the immediate past district governor or the HPC will review and respond to the complaint. If an allegation is made against a governor, governor-elect, or governor-nominee, or spouse/partner you must also contact your Club and District Support Representative at Rotary International. If any district leaders are the subject of the complaint, they should not participate in the discussion. If you have reported harassment to your district governor, past district governor, or the committee and feel that they have not addressed it adequately, report the behaviour to the Rotary International Director.

In District 7010 the District HPC shall consist of three to five members. Having a standing district committee formed creates a transparent process.

Those selected for this committee should:

- Have experience dealing with allegations in their professions
- Be dedicated to maintaining and promoting a harassment-free environment
- Be committed to providing an objective review

A complaint at any level should not be reviewed by a friend or relative of either the accused or complainant

V. Report the allegation to the appropriate person or committee

Any Rotarian who believes that the words or actions of another member or visitor constitutes harassment or a violation of the Code of Conduct, no matter how severe or pervasive, should report the situation within 7 days. The essential details of the incident should be submitted in writing or via email. If the action happens at a club level meeting, activity, or event, the complaint should be first directed to the club board. If the action happens at a district level meeting, activity, or event, the complaint should be directed to the District Governor. If any Rotarian is contacted by a fellow Rotarian or a non-member with a complaint, tell the person who reports that incident that Rotary does not tolerate harassment. Discuss what action could be taken next and let the individual decide if they want to file a formal complaint and allow a review and inquiry.

VI. Review/Investigation of a Complaint

Complaints under this policy that occur at a club-sponsored event are to be managed and reviewed by the club board.

Complaints that occur at a district level event are to be managed and reviewed by the committee designated by the District Governor.

Acknowledge every report with respect. If the situation warrants it, tell the person who made the complaint that Rotary will support them if they want to report it to local law enforcement. Clubs are encouraged to create their own Harassment Prevention Committees to handle these types of allegations. This helps ensure that complaints will be handled fairly and quickly. If your club does not have a committee, contact the club president or district governor.

Complaints will be reviewed promptly and in **strict confidentiality**. A timely resolution of each complaint will be reached and communicated to the parties involved to the appropriate extent under the given circumstances. Where applicable, the club board or district committee will implement immediate and appropriate corrective action designed to stop the improper conduct and correct its effects. At the club level, if additional expertise and support is needed at any step in a harassment investigation, the club president or committee chair should reach out to the district committee.

VII. Immediate Actions

1. Notification and Possible Suspension of accused Rotarian: As soon as a complaint has been brought to a Rotary Club's attention, the immediate action should be to notify the Rotarian involved in the alleged incident and that depending on the allegation, that actions may include but not be limited to the following:

a. Their membership may be temporarily placed on hold until a complete investigation takes place.
b. Their participation in activities, youth events, or any service project may temporarily be suspended.

2. *Review the complaint and determine who to interview:*

a. Review the complaint and acknowledge the receipt.
b. Decide who should be interviewed to validate the reported facts.
c. Arrange interviews with everyone involved in the situation while remembering the importance of ***confidentiality***. The reviewers would talk to the person making the complaint, the accused Rotarian, and other people who may have witnessed the event and might be able to provide perspective. Arrange for interviews to be conducted with at least two reviewers present.
d. If someone refuses to be interviewed or will not return calls or emails, that is to be noted in the report. There should be at least three attempts to contact the person using two different methods.
e. The interviews can be conducted in person, by phone, or in an online meeting. Complete, thorough notes are to be kept on the interviews conducted.
f. Following the interviews, the team assigned will make recommendations and communicate with individuals involved. The District Governor will be kept informed of the actions taken.

VIII. Conduct a thorough review and inquiry

The lead person(s) handling the review should start by talking to the person who made the allegation. The fact-finding interviews should collect details without blame or criticism about the complaint.

1. What happened and when did the incident happen?
2. Where did it happen?
3. Who might have witnessed the incident?
4. What is the desired outcome (for example, desired action by the offender, the club, the district)? It is important to inform the complainant that the desired outcome may not be possible.

The review should focus on the subject of the complaint, telling the accused Rotarian that an allegation has been made. Ask this Rotarian to describe what happened. Request the names of possible witnesses to the event or behaviour and any documentation or evidence they have to suggest the event did not take place as alleged.

Use a similar approach with witnesses. Ask questions that establish facts and avoid "why" questions that can lead to shaming or blaming the person who made the allegation.

It is best to talk to people who directly saw what occurred. This will lead you to a stronger conclusion. If you talk only to the person who made the complaint and the accused Rotarian, they will likely offer different — if not opposite — descriptions.

If there are no witnesses, talk to both people involved and a determination is made on the balance of probabilities. This can be exceedingly difficult, and it is one reason why it is best to have a committee, not an individual, make this determination.

IX. Write a summary of the incident, including any action you recommend

When the review and inquiry come to an end and fact-finding interviews have been completed, the HPC or the individuals assigned to the review and inquiry should write a summary report with the findings and recommendations. Based on those findings, determine if further action is necessary to ensure there is not a repeat. This might include asking the accused Rotarian to resign from a club role, preventing them from taking part in future activities, especially any youth-related events, or terminating someone's membership from Rotary. Follow through with your recommendations and do what is needed to make sure the behaviour does not happen again.

When the review is completed, a report should be submitted to the District Governor . Once the situation has been resolved, either satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily, all documentation and accompanying letters are to be placed in the District 7010 restricted space through Club Runner with a reflection of timelines and outcomes.

X. Protection Against Retaliation

Rotary will not in any way retaliate against an individual who makes a good faith complaint or report under this policy or provides information related to such complaint or report, nor permit any member, volunteer, or guest to do so. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and should be reported immediately to the district governor.

XI. Sanctions

Any Rotarian who is found to have violated this policy or retaliated against another individual for making a report or complaint in good faith under this policy will be subject to appropriate sanction.

A club **must** terminate the membership of any Rotarian who admits to, is convicted of, or is otherwise found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment.

If Rotary International learns that a club has knowingly failed to terminate the membership of such a Rotarian, it can act to terminate the Rotarian's membership as well as the club's charter.

A non-Rotarian who admits to, is convicted of, or is otherwise found to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment will be prohibited from participating in any Rotary activities.

A non-Rotarian who has behaved in a manner not in line with our Rotary Code of Conduct shall:
* have their volunteer status revoked
* not be able to obtain reference letters or acknowledgement of volunteer hours
* have applicable legal action taken against him if warranted

A club may not grant membership to a person known to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment.

XII. Definitions

Disability: A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.

Discrimination: Illegal treatment of a person(s) based on race, religion, colour, sex, national origin/ancestry/citizenship, age, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, veteran or any other protected class status.

Gender Identity or Expression: The actual or perceived appearance, identity, expression or behaviour of a person as being male or female, whether or not that perceived appearance, identity, expression or behaviour is different from that traditionally associated with the person's designated sex at birth.

Harassment: Harassment is defined as any repeated unwelcome verbal, visual, written or physical conduct, which creates an intimidating or hostile environment. Some examples include but are not limited to the following: derogatory comments or jokes regarding a person's race, colour, age, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, physical appearance or any other legally

protected characteristic or activity; or the distribution or display of written or graphic materials which have the same effect.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual Harassment is defined as any repeated unwelcome verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature when (1) submission to or rejection of this conduct by an individual is made a condition of volunteer work/service or is used as a factor in decisions affecting assigned duties, or other conditions of voluntary activities and/or assigned duties; or (2) this conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's volunteer work or creates an intimidating or hostile environment.